



## Bridgewater Review

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VOLUME 26 NUMBER 2 *DECEMBER 2007*

# Bridgewater Review



BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE

# Steve Mills

Photorealist Oil Painter



Clear Through. 32 x 40". Oil on linen, 2007.

# Bridgewater Review

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John Hooker, Assistant Professor of Art: *Sleepless*. Painted plaster. "One night I couldn't sleep. I kept picturing this large rolling ball with arms. The hands tried to pick up fingers as more fingers broke from the weight of the rolling ball." Additional works by Professor Hooker are on pages 15–18.

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## Editor's Notebook

### Twenty More Good Years

I am also glad that I live in the United States and not in sub-Saharan Africa where the HIV- AIDs menace has driven live expectancy down to 40 years of age in some countries and has brought horrible deaths to millions of people. We take for granted our long life and good health prospects, but over three billion people in the world don't have that luxury.

The key to all this talk of life expectancy is whether the 20 or more years that I and others have left on average will allow me the ability to get around without a cane or walker; that I will be able to maintain mental function (and let's not forget urinary function); and that when I the open medicine cabinet, I won't be staring at twenty drug containers.

When I alerted my friends about this new data on life expectancy in Massachusetts, most laughed if off and proudly stated that they would beat the numbers. But it is interesting at this age the party discussions that go on among baby boomers. There are now regular animated discussions of retirement plans, pensions and 401Ks, nursing home insurance and that old stand-by, arthritis. Twenty years may be a long way off, but aging and the aging mentality has set in place.

There really is no need to dwell on these twenty years, since there is not much that can be done to stop the march of time. Sure we can eat properly, exercise often, see the doctor regularly and keep a positive attitude. But time is another dimension that is not influenced by all that we may do to add years to our life. As John Maynard Keynes, the famous British economist once said about predicting the future, "In the long run, we're all dead." That may be a bit harsh, but it does make clear the fact that no matter how much we try, we don't control our own destiny.

So if you are like me and in your 60s, enjoy the next 20 or 30 or more years and make them "good" years. As we say in Polish—*Sto Lat*—may you live 100 years.

—Michael Kryzanek, Editor

Now that I am 60, I find that there are those occasional milliseconds when my mind wanders and I begin to think about my mortality. I fully expect to live to a ripe old age, but there is no denying that recent medical data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health give me on average about 20 more years on this planet

According to the study, life expectancy from birth in our state is 79.8 years. The study also shows that if I and my fellow citizens in the Commonwealth are going to be among the departed, it will likely be because of heart disease or cancer, which remain the top two causes of death. So twenty good years along with daily prayers that medical science finds a cure for two of our most deadly health threats and I just might beat the odds.

But since 79.8 is an average number, I choose to define myself and my prospects for a long life as above average. I therefore have no plans to go out and buy a cemetery plot or get my financial affairs in order. In fact, just the opposite, I plan in these twenty years to enjoy good friends, relish in good times and go on really good vacations.

Thankfully, we in Massachusetts are blessed with some of the best hospitals, medical professionals and researchers in the world. Everyday new cures are being introduced and with all those wonder drugs that keep flashing across my television screen, hope runs eternal. I firmly believe that in twenty years, not only will I be around and kicking, but that the life expectancy line will continue to go upward into the 90 range.



# Living with Harry

Ann Brunjes



*"Tell me one last thing," said Harry. "Is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?" Dumbledore beamed at him... "Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?"*  
—Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (721).

It is a still July evening, not yet dark. Fireflies begin to flicker as cries of "Stupefy!" and "Expelliarmus!" burst in the back yard.

My seven year old cousin shoots by the screen porch, in hot pursuit of my daughter. Their wands wave, they shriek with laughter, tumble on the grass or freeze into position, shouting spells and hexes as they careen across the yard. My oldest daughter sits on the front porch, a one-woman wand manufacturing operation, churning out wands and replacement wands as the orders roll in. Curls of bark from her jackknife lie in twisty heaps on the front steps.

My children and my cousin Ann's children—six in all, ranging in age from five to twelve—are Harry Potter aficionados. They are, it might be said, obsessed with Harry Potter. They love those books. We read them aloud. We listen to Jim Dale's readings on Books on Tape. They sometimes read to one another, and they read by themselves. But my children and Ann's kids do more than just read the books. They inhabit them. Harry Potter, his friends and enemies have become intertwined with my children's imaginative lives and their relationships to one another. While fans write new

chapters of the Potter books online, my kids and their cousins invite Harry, his friends and enemies out to play on summer evenings and cold winter afternoons, invite them into their lives, make them a part of themselves.

If sales figures are any indication, they are not alone.

J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter stories are the most commercially successful book series ever. According to



Nina, center, reads to Julia and Olivia.

*Crain's New York Business* (February 5, 2007), the "series has sold 325 million copies worldwide and contributed more than \$800 million to revenues at...Scholastic"—this before the final installment, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Scholastic, 2007) sold a record-breaking 11.5 million copies in its first ten days on bookstore shelves (AP Financial Wire, August 2, 2007). Despite—or perhaps because of—the series' popularity, critical assessment of Rowling's novels is divided. Harold Bloom, writing in the *Wall Street Journal* (July 11, 2000) asserts that the only reason a child should read a Potter book is so that he or she "may not forget wholly the sensation of turning the pages of a book, any book." Ouch. As Bloom sneeringly predicted, academics have flocked to Harry: a recent Modern Language Association

International Bibliography search resulted in over 220 hits for academic essays, books and book collections on the series. Even those like Bloom who loathe the books are gratified to see children reading... but even this is no reason for unqualified joy. As David Mehegan reported recently in the *Boston Globe* (July 9, 2007), "While millions of kids snapped up Harry Potter, some of

those interested in youth reading believe that they are not necessarily committed readers. 'People said, "Children are reading again—all hail Harry Potter" said Roger Sutton, editor of *The Horn Book*, the Boston-based children's book-review magazine. 'But lots of kids read only Harry Potter. It doesn't necessarily turn a kid into a reader.'"

As a professional reader of early American literature, what I do is reread novels, reread poems, reread autobiographies and memoirs and sermons. I augment this reading, of course, with others' interpretations (in the form of critical essay) of those same texts...which I then read again. I have built my life as an academic—all academics do—at least in part on a practice of rereading. Yet the expert quoted above finds this poor practice for children and Harold Bloom thinks reading Harry Potter—never mind re-reading Harry Potter—is a colossal waste of time. I think they're all being rather silly. As my kids delve into Harry's exploits, they create room for themselves in Harry's world and for Harry in their world. They push the boundaries of reading, explode the limits of the printed page and engage in powerful, exciting readings of what may indeed be mediocre books by Bloomian standards. Whatever the final critical take on Harry Potter, for my daughter Nina (age twelve), the appeal of the books is straightforward: "They're fantasy but they're so real. Harry and his friends have been together since they were ten and they're now seventeen and figuring out if they're going to continue being friends. Harry's going after this bad guy, but Harry's an orphan who's avenging his



Photographs by Gary Santon.

parents. He's really powerful! The prophesy tells him he has to kill Voldemort, but even without [the prophesy] he wants to kill him. So it's very real, crazy intricate, and extreme. And even the bad characters are interesting." What more can we ask from a children's book? Crazy intricacy; heroism; complex characterizations; friendship; love. My girls can read and reread Harry all they want, and I will be content.

When I was young, I was a mad reader—I read all the time, read whenever I could. But I had a secret about my reading: I pretty much read, for most of my childhood and early adolescence, only eight books: Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House series. I had favorites in the series, and my choices, if you know these books, were a little perverse: *Farmer Boy*, which imagines a year in Laura's husband Almanzo's childhood, and *The Long Winter*, which describes (as the title implies) a dreadful winter in South Dakota during which the Ingalls family nearly starves to death. I loved Laura, and I loved Almanzo, and I am sure that the better parts of my character were formed through the time I spent with them. Laura was so tough—smart and resourceful, reliable and hardworking. She wasn't as pretty or kind as her sister Mary, but she had nerve. Laura's everyday courage, to a sheltered child living in middle-class comfort, was astonishing. Her bravery wasn't easy; she often had to talk herself into it in the midst of tremendous fear. In puzzling over Laura's courage, it gradually dawned on me that she had no choice. There was no room for her

to start blubbering and bewail her or her family's fate, no time for self pity or really even self-reflection. Laura was all about forward movement – completing chores, learning to teach, getting to spring and planting and better times.

In my habitual rereading of the Little House books—a practice that should not have turned me into the “real” reader I have become, according to Roger Sutton—I absorbed Laura. I often imagined myself in a tight spot with my own family or at school, imagined how Laura would handle the little problems I encountered. But I never lived with Laura and Almanzo the way my kids do with Harry and Co. This is partly due to the nature of the books: as you might imagine, a reenactment of starvation in a shanty on the prairie doesn't carry quite the same appeal as saving the wizarding world from destruction. But more importantly, I didn't read the Little House books with anyone else. My parents had never read them, my brother certainly didn't read them, and I didn't know anyone else who loved them the way I did. My enjoyment of Laura and Almanzo lived completely inside my own head.

My children's experience of the Harry Potter books is different than my reading of the Little House series for many reasons. Their first encounter with Harry was through my and my husband's voices—reading Harry has always been a joint enterprise for them. Only my oldest daughter has read each book herself, and my youngest girl, who is five, is just learning to read now. But all three know the intricacies of plot and the full panoply of characters as well as I know the residents of DeSmet, South Dakota. What takes them beyond my experience with Laura and Almanzo is their performance, never the same twice, of chapters or even whole books, carried out with their cousins whenever our families are together. There is a communal element to

their reading that played no part in my experience of the Little House books, and it is different than anything I have ever experienced as a reader, and far richer.

What fascinates me is the vividness of Harry's participation in their lives. Watching the kids chase one



another around the yard, I can figure out that they're doing something Potter-related; the wands are a dead giveaway. But until I asked I had no idea how intricate these games are. The first game they play is called Filch. Filch is the caretaker of Hogwarts, the wizarding school Harry attends. He is a “squib”—a wizard who can't perform magic. This is essentially a fortified game of tag where the unfortunate child playing Filch is It. The game of Filch has the lowest magic quotient—according to Nina (a primary organizer with her cousin Emily, also twelve, of all these games) the game has “some magic and spells but not really.” A game with a higher proportion of magic involves reenactment and revision of various parts of the books. The kids adopt the persona of any character they choose, and decide together which part of the story to play. Gradually the scene changes as play proceeds, above and beyond what happens in Rowling's series. Sometimes the kids create new characters, like a sister for Harry, and sometimes they play themselves with a new name, casting spells and hexes in Hogwarts or Pittsfield or Bridgewater. Thus, Rowling's books are only the start of my kids' relationship to Harry. Perhaps a dearth of interesting female characters led them to decide Harry needed a sister—and poof!—now he has a



sister, whose name (Emma) sounds a great deal like Emily, the child who invented her. The kids don't simply reenact Harry, looping the tape over and over again. They augment, tweak, change. They play out scenes that reflect their moods that day. They bicker over how Harry should attack the ogre, how Hermione should dance at the ball. Together, they own the books in a way I never owned Laura or Almanzo's stories.

Tonight I read the closing chapters of *The Deathly Hallows* with my daughter Olivia, who is eight. (If you haven't read this book and don't want to know what happens, stop reading here).

As we read chapter thirty-three, "The Prince's Tale," Olivia almost levitated off the bed with excitement. "So Snape is really good! Snape really loves people! But why did he ever want to be with the Death Eaters? Why was he so mean to Petunia?" We had to set the book aside for about ten minutes as we explored the complexities of that most intriguing character, Severus Snape. Snape, like Harry, is a rich and interesting character because when he is "good," it is because he chooses goodness. He doesn't do the right thing, like Laura, solely out of duty or necessity or because he can either be good or be dead. Snape is good—he bears the derision and hatred of others, and he sacrifices his life for these same people—for many complex reasons, not the least of which is his need to ease the guilt he bears for having betrayed the woman he loves. This is much more grown-up stuff than I ever faced when reading about Laura.

Olivia's questions and the problem of Snape reflect the "crazy intricacy" of the Potter series: if Snape really is good, why does he do such bad things? This is a big and thorny subject for an eight year old—hell, it's a big and thorny question for me—and my wish for her is that as she puzzles through Snape's perplexing behavior she will be able to transfer what she learns there to her interactions with people in that other, non-reading part of her life. Laura taught me to be dutiful, a character trait that has not always served me well. Harry and Snape might teach Olivia that true goodness is a path we select and that being good—being decent—often requires disobedience. In doing so, Snape can be as real to Olivia as the annoying boy who pokes her dur-



ing library period. As Dumbledore tells Harry, because something exists in your head doesn't mean that it isn't real. Olivia can return to the conundrum of Snape her whole life. In reenacting his best and worst moments with her cousins, in arguing about why or how he does what he does, perhaps she can figure him out. And the wisdom she gains from that rereading is as solid and meaningful as anything she encounters in the physical world.

Reading, for me, is about love. It is about intimacy. When we read a book—when that book inhabits

us, and we inhabit it—we come to know and love (but not necessarily like) the characters in it perhaps better than the people in our own lives. And when we reread, we have an opportunity to revisit those people and our moments with them in a way we never can do in the workaday world. This is the joy and solace that reading has brought me. And no matter what Harold Bloom says, by reading Harry Potter deeply and repeatedly and with others who are doing the same thing, my children can have that same joy...only better.

—Ann Brunjes is Associate Professor of English and Chairperson of the Department of English.

# Promoting Economic Literacy in Massachusetts and Beyond

Margaret Brooks



A penny saved is a penny earned. If you dance, you have to pay the fiddler. You can't have your cake and eat it too. Despite growing up hearing these and other economics-related folk expressions, many of us never studied economics formally before reaching adulthood. If we were lucky, we learned our economics in college and we applied the concepts to our lives. If we were unlucky, we learned our economics lessons the hard way.

The traditional definition of literacy focuses only on reading and writing skills. In many societies, literacy has been the primary means of communicating the collective store of knowledge and experiences from one generation to the next. Literacy has always played an important role in educating citizens, thus enabling them to think and effectively interact with society.

It is also clear that in recent years, achieving literacy and education has become a much more complex process. Today's world is rapidly changing, with technological advance and globalization increasingly impacting consumer and producer decisions. The key question has become: What does it take to be an educated and literate person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? In other words, how can we prepare our children to participate in and contribute to a profoundly-changing, global economic environment? People must be able to read, communicate, and financially assess the choices available to them through the Internet and other sources.

Economic literacy programs can prepare kindergarten through grade 12 students to make informed decisions about all of life's challenges: What goods and services should I buy? Should I use my current income, savings, or borrow to pay for my purchases? Should I become an entrepreneur, or for whom will I work? How will I invest my savings? Should I support higher taxes in my community in exchange for the promise of more government services? New definitions of literacy have arisen which include an understanding of personal financial decision-making and of how the economy works.

Children learn from a very young age that money provides their parents with access to goods and services. They learn to express their wants well before they understand the economic concepts of markets and opportunity costs. In the aggregate, this process generates a large indirect spending impact on the economy. Marketers know that young children, in effect, have the power to significantly influence their parents' spending. They target children's demand through strategically-placed advertisements and clever promotions.



Like the physician who prescribes a medicine that the patient must buy, young children can simply place their "orders" for desirable goods with their parents, who for the most part do the actual buying. Simply put, Johnny can ask for a train set for Christmas, but he does not have to worry about how much it costs. He simply waits to see if Santa can make it and deliver it to him on time. From his perspective, prices and income are not relevant to him, and not to Santa either. It is a disjoint process when the spender is different from the ultimate user.

Salem State-  
Bridgewater  
State Summer  
Content Institute,  
Boston Federal  
Reserve.  
August 2005.

Economics Challenge 2006. Quizbowl event with buzzers moderated by MCEE Board Chair Dan McCarthy.



Indeed, the entire consumer decision-making process can be mysterious to young children, partly because parents tend to shield the specifics of their incomes and household budget from the children. Parents may feel they are giving their children security by shielding them from economic realities. Yet, like reading and mathematics, economics is not a subject that can be mastered in a day. Economic educators have found that understanding of economics concepts is best built through a gradual process of studying and learning.

As our children reach adolescence and then adulthood, they are already making their own increasingly complex economic decisions. They may have gained extensive knowledge of how to use computers and the Internet, yet the timing of their economic and technological proficiencies may not coincide.

Consider the economic perspective of typical students entering college at age 18. They may be living away from home for the first time. However, they are not alone. Credit card companies are there to “befriend” them: setting up tables with free giveaways in campus centers, sending out mailings with special pre-approved offers, and enticing students with instant access to thousands of dollars in credit. After they accept these offers, there are a multitude of web sites on the Internet, from ebay.com to match.com to fulltiltpoker.com, all ready and willing to take their credit card numbers. Is today’s 18-year-old wise enough and informed enough to make good economic decisions when faced with these choices?

If young adults are formally learning economic principles for the first time in college as sophomores or juniors, is frightening to think that it may already be too late. By then they may be saddled with large amounts

of debt that will adversely affect their ability to start a household or buy a home after they graduate.

Additionally, many college students are facing complex workplace decisions for the first time in their lives. Should they take jobs on campus that may pay less, or should they commute to more distant locations, which require automobiles and insurance? What happens to academics when an employer demands last-minute, late-night work hours? Ideally students should weigh the costs and benefits of their work and consumer choices, balancing the need for more income with the need for time for study. This evaluation process requires an economic way of thinking.

Young adults face economic choices such as these even if they do not go to college at age 18. Some never graduate from high school. Some graduate from high school and go right to work. Some graduate from high school and go to trade school. Others work for a while before going to college. Like the 18-year old college students, they too are plunging in and participating in the marketplace. They are making economic decisions about working, consuming, and borrowing that can impact their lives for years to come. Whatever economics training they received in their elementary-middle-high schools could be critical to their success.

According to the recently publicized results of the 2005 NCEE/Harris Poll on economic literacy, many children apparently do not understand the importance of learning economics until they become adults: “Economics is a subject of interest to a majority of adults. In contrast, only half of students say they are interested in economics...Despite this interest in and value in economics, most adults and students have not mastered basic economics concepts.”<sup>1</sup> Thus economics lessons need to be learned early on, and throughout a child’s k-12 educational experiences.

Internationally, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been active for over 60 years in monitoring and promoting literacy across the globe. Their estimates show that 774 million adults still cannot read, and 100 million children do not have access to school.<sup>2</sup> However, even these numbers may understate the true scope of problem. Self-reporting measures of literacy such as these have proven to be unreliable, and in many cases, people who claim to be able to read are unable to do so when asked. In addition, quantitative skills are increasingly being recognized as an important component of being a literate person in today's world.

In response to these concerns, UNESCO has been developing wider instruments that allow for the measurement of literacy both in a traditional sense, such as reading documents, and in terms of quantitative or economic skills, such as calculating interest on a loan. Additionally, experts are now favoring approaches that measure literacy on a continuum, rather than as a "literate-versus-illiterate" dichotomy. It is interesting to note that the International Adult Literacy Survey, conducted in twenty developed countries in three phases (1994, 1996 and 1998), showed that even with this new measure, many adults in developed countries have relatively weak literacy and quantitative skills. Economic educators are not surprised, and they see "spreading the word" about economic and financial literacy as an opportunity to help improve people's lives across the globe.

Within the United States, the National Council on Economic Education (NCEE) has been working since 1949 to make sure children obtain economic skills and knowledge while they are young and still in school so they can make informed choices throughout their lives. They offer a wide range of materials for teaching and assessing learning. Much like Jessica Seinfeld's new cookbook *Deceptively Delicious* gives recipes for slipping vegetables into pastries, NCEE provides educators with lessons that "slip" economics concepts into more standard k-12 subjects such as history, geography, and mathematics.

In addition to curriculum development, NCEE provides grants to help states carry out economic education programs, and it sponsors annual conferences so that economic educators can meet and share ideas. Over the years, NCEE has built a strong network of affiliated Councils and Centers throughout the country. Interestingly, Massachusetts was among the first Councils on Economic Education formed in the United States.

The Massachusetts Council on Economic Education (MCEE) has been housed at several Massachusetts colleges and universities during its long history, including most recently Boston University and the University of Massachusetts Lowell. In September 2007, the MCEE Board voted to move the MCEE offices to Bridgewater State College, Hunt Hall, in response to an invitation from Provost and Vice President Nancy Kleniewski, and in light of the ongoing support for economic education that the College has provided over the last fourteen years. MCEE Board Chairman Daniel McCarthy, former Federal Reserve Bank President Cathy Minehan, and several other key business and banking leaders have served on the Board for a number of years. Their expertise and long-standing commitment to statewide economic education will undoubtedly help the organization to become even stronger and more visible, as evidenced on the MCEE web site, [masseconomiced.org](http://masseconomiced.org).

I see my role, as the new MCEE President, to work with the Board and with local, state, and regional educa-



**Economics Challenge 2006 State Champs. Belmont High Team with teacher Mat Glauninger.**

tors to provide collaborative leadership for economic education initiatives throughout Massachusetts. A primary goal of the organization is to provide teachers with economics-content based materials and training so that they may effectively teach these concepts to their students as mandated in the Massachusetts History and Social Science Frameworks. For instance, Massachusetts expects second graders to be able to "give examples of people in the community who are both producers and consumers."<sup>3</sup>

Bridgewater State College has had an NCEE-affiliated Center for Economic Education since 1993, and it is currently headed by Interim Director George G. Watson Jr. The only other Center for Economic Education in Massachusetts is located at Salem State College,

# Massachusetts Council on Economic Education MCEE

and is headed by Director Dorothy Siden. Dr. Siden is Chairperson of the Economics Department at Salem State and she has been active in promoting economic education on the North Shore. For instance, in 2005, Bridgewater and Salem State College Centers collaborated to offer a successful Summer Content Institute Massachusetts Department of Education on local economic history. One of my most important goals as MCEE President is to build a strong statewide network of Centers located throughout Massachusetts.

From a personal perspective, I have been most gratified to see the excitement and pride of Massachusetts students as they participate in team contests to test their economic knowledge. For the past three years, I have been the Principal Investigator for three \$3,000 NCEE grants, obtained through Bridgewater State College, that have paid for publicity, student trophies and t-shirts, and other related expenses relating to the Massachusetts Economic Challenge. Massachusetts is one of approximately 35 states that participate in the NCEE-sponsored economics competition for high school students. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston hosted the Massachusetts Economics Challenge for the last two years, providing leadership, particularly from Scott Guild, Director of Economic Education, along with logistical support including meeting spaces, lunches, and the all-important buzzers. This has been a very visible statewide effort to promote economic literacy as teachers work with their classes all year to get them ready for the competition tests in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and international/current events. Interest has been steadily growing, and the most recent competition, held in March 2007, attracted over 140 students from across the state. The winning team from Belmont High went on to win the regional competition, and then became finalists in the national competition. Next year's 2008 Massachusetts Challenge will be held again at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston on March 31, 2008.

Other exciting upcoming events include a statewide series of Virtual Economics teacher workshops funded through an Excellence in Economic Education \$10,000 grant, as well as Making-a-Job and Mini-Society Entrepreneurship summer workshops for teachers funded by two additional grants from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and NCEE. Teachers will learn about age-appropriate classroom activities for their students, include developing building and marketing their products; creating a bank and printing currency; and

completing job applications and business plans. With an emphasis on hands-on training in markets, programs such as these bring economics alive in the classroom.

Building community partnerships is an important part of the process too. Many Massachusetts business, education, and government leaders see the teaching of economic and financial literacy to our children as a growing priority. For instance, in November 2007, Treasurer Cahill's office sponsored a Youth Financial Education Forum for principals and other education leaders at Suffolk University. MCEE collaborated with other group leaders on the planning of the event and was an invited participant at the information tables. Although the advent of new casinos in Massachusetts will undoubtedly bring new economic development dollars to the state, it will also offer new reasons to teach our children about financial responsibility and understanding risk.

Thus, being a literate person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means much more than being able to read and write. It also means being able to intelligently assess one's opportunities and choices, and being able to make informed decisions. Luckily, Bridgewater State College is working to actively promote economic and financial literacy so that Massachusetts children will not have to learn the "easy come, easy go" and "a fool and his money are soon parted" lessons the hard way.

- 1 ncee.net, What Americans Know about Economics, Executive Summary, p. 3.
- 2 unesco.org, Education, Literacy links
- 3 <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/final.doc>. p. 16

—Margaret Brooks is Professor of Economics and Chairperson of the Economics Department.



# Special Education Around the World

Lisa Battaglini



In 1992, when I first joined the faculty of Bridgewater State College, one of my goals was to begin an exploration of other countries' treatment of children with disabilities. My focus was not so much on compiling data, as it was in working with my foreign counterparts to better develop services for children with special needs. My assumption was that few places would meet the American standard of legal protection for children with disabilities; the guarantee of a free, appropriate, public education for each. In those countries I've studied over the past 15 years, my findings have revealed that although people dealing with the issues of special education may confront many of the same problems, each country has its own unique circumstances, policies, barriers, and resources with which to contend.



To best understand how foreign progress in special education compares with our own we must first take a brief look at the American history of special education. Prior to 1850 there was little attention paid to the education of children with disabilities. In a primarily agrarian society formal education was not seen as essential for the successful growth of any child, much less one with a disability, therefore there were virtually no programs, legal guidelines, or schools for the disabled in the United States. In fact, more than half of the children we now consider disabled, primarily those with learning disabilities and other mild limitations, would never have been considered disabled before 1960.

Only serious disabilities such as blindness, deafness, mental retardation, and other intensively limiting conditions were the focus of disability research. The

early 19<sup>th</sup> century work of noted European physicians studying children with disabilities indicated that even children with relatively severe disabling conditions could learn through systematic instruction. The work of Philippe Pinel (1793), Jean Marc Gaspard Itard (1800), and Edouard Seguin (1842), prompted others in the United States to explore the possibilities of educating the disabled. When Seguin emigrated to America in 1848 he brought with him his philosophy, ideas, and excitement for the future in the field.

Early efforts for the education of the disabled, however, went terribly amiss when institutions designed for the systematic education of the mentally retarded became instantly overcrowded, unmanageable, and fraught with flaws. Harsh ware-

housing of human beings was the result. From 1848–1888, twelve institutions opened in the United States, and immediately became filled past capacity, understaffed, and incapable of properly servicing clients, let alone educating them. There was little improvement in conditions for the disabled for the next 100 years. In fact, the building of institutions proliferated until the 1960s, and the inhumane, lifelong institutionalizing of the disabled steadily increased until that time. Although compulsory education became legal in 1918, the exclusion of children with disabilities persisted. Children who were mentally retarded, deaf, blind, autistic, behaviorally disordered, seriously learning disabled, or in fact possessed any other type of disability could

**Dr. Battaglini seen reading to a group of elementary school students, Belize, 2007.**

be, and often were, told that their local school had no program to meet their needs, no teacher trained to deal with their disability, and no obligation to educate them. Sadly, when parents were brave enough to contest such school policies, they would find that the courts upheld the schools' decision.

The 1954 landmark desegregation case, *Brown v. Topeka*, was the result of seven sets of parents banning together to create change in the delivery of education for their children. This prompted parents of the disabled to form advocacy groups to actively seek out programs and legislation to protect their children. As a result, in 1975 the first federal legislation was enacted which guaranteed that every child with a disability be given a free and appropriate public education. This law, originally called the Education for All Handicapped Children Act is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Since 1975 parents, teachers, and administrators in the United States have worked tirelessly to provide individual education programs to each child with a disability. Training teachers, developing programs, finding the money to finance programs, educating parents, and preparing students for post graduation opportunities, are some of the many issues which have confronted the field since 1975.

It is too presumptive, perhaps ethnocentric, to believe that we have much to teach the rest of the world in regards to special education, and little to gain from foreign experience. Yet, I must admit this was my mindset when I began my work with teachers in Moscow. The partnership I developed between School 1411 in Moscow and Bridgewater State College began in Millis, MA. The Millis School System had hired a native Russian teacher to create and teach in an innovative language immersion program. Along with several other BSC professors, a few BSC graduate students, and local teachers and administrators, a collaboration was formed with the Millis Schools to "bring special education to Moscow". What we found in Moscow in 1995 was that teachers, administrators, and the ministry of education were all eager to broaden their horizons to meet the needs of children with special needs. However, the economy, infrastructure of the school system, and long established attitudes about the disabled presented unique obstacles to overcome.

Our collaboration began with a trip to Moscow where we met with the Minister of Education,

teachers, and school administrators to determine the best plan of action for a future synergy. We quickly learned that while there were classes for the "disabled" in some schools, these were focused on children with mild learning disabilities. And although we were told there was a school for the blind and deaf, we were not given access to any of these schools. We were also surprised to read in the local newspaper that someone had recently purchased and brought a wheelchair to Moscow. This hardly seemed newsworthy until we began to notice the number of people with severed or poorly formed limbs loitering in the subways on 18" x 18" boards made of wood or cardboard, begging.

In a visit of 10 days and at least 30 subway rides, in a city the size of New York, we never saw another disabled person. This was not a coincidence. Our hosts explained to us that there were three daunting forces that created their absence. In the first case, many people were ashamed of family members with disabilities, in the second, there were virtually no services, employment, or programs for the disabled, and thirdly, the cost of raising a child with a disability was prohibitive in a world where the cost of living and unemployment was at an all time high, and gross income at an all time low.

Under such circumstances, a rather hopeless situation occurred in which many parents did the best they could to provide for a disabled child at home, while many others gave children up for adoption, at birth or in early childhood. Parents who gave up children may have considered that at least in an orphanage there would

be built-in care for these children. In fact, upon visiting one orphanage in Moscow, I did observe that children with Down Syndrome were integrated with other children and provided the same basic care, including rudimentary education programs. It became clear that for widespread change to occur in



Schoolgirl,  
ready for class,  
Moscow, 1997.

Moscow it would be essential to begin, as we had in the United States, by empowering those with a vested interest in the disabled—parents. A series of teleconferences ensued between parents from Moscow and their counterparts in America. Professionals in both countries were surprised to learn that the professionals in the United States did not have all of the answers. Parents on both sides complained that although, lip-service was paid to their demands, programs were often lacking, negative attitudes prevailed, and the emotional and financial costs of raising a child with a disability were formidable. The Moscow-BSC Special Education Collaborative continues to function with a focus on bringing educators together to observe and collaborate on philosophy, programming and service delivery.

In 2000, I was offered a position teaching an Introduction to Special Education course in Turkey. I saw this as an opportunity to expand the BSC collaborative efforts with Moscow, and to learn more about the Middle East and its work with the disabled. I learned that teachers throughout Turkey were being prepared in huge numbers to teach disabled children, as a result of a recent legal development in which their government had enacted a law similar to the American IDEA. Under this law each child with a disability would be guaranteed a free public education. The school I worked with, in Istanbul, was a private facility for wealthy children. It could be compared to Milton Academy, in Milton, MA. There were a few children with minor disabilities in the school, and these children were provided with the most progressive techniques teachers could acquire. The school, however, was hardly representative of a typical public school in Turkey. Although no teachers I encountered had visited American schools, or were familiar with any aspect of special education, their attitude toward special education was positive. Legislation addressing and ensuring education for children with disabilities was evidence of emerging acceptance and proactive efforts on behalf of disabled children.

After five, freezing cold visits to Russia and a lovely summer in Istanbul, I decided that I would add to my knowledge of special education abroad, but in a warmer climate. My grandmother had grown up in Cuba, and in 2001 travel bans had been lifted for teachers, so it seemed Cuba was a likely country to explore. Oddly

enough, in many ways visiting Cuba was reminiscent of Russia. The communist influence in buildings and in a history of authoritarian leadership was similar. While the US had cut itself off from Cuba, Russia had obviously remained closely allied. But where teachers and administrators in Moscow were often frustrated, and stifled by low pay and lack of special education progress, teachers in Cuba, similarly to those in Istanbul, appeared hopeful and optimistic. Ironically, the condition of the schools visited in Havana had far fewer resources than those in Moscow, including a lack of paper, pencils, and books, but school authorities boasted of full inclusion, well adapted schools for the physically disabled, blind, deaf and mentally retarded, and of 100% literacy.

Recess time for Cuban students, Cuba, 2002.



It may be that the positive rhetoric in Havana was due to a fear of speaking against a government-run school system, and that some of the griping in Moscow was due to professionals in a “freer” Russia feeling able to voice dissatisfaction, but nonetheless, in Cuba there seemed to be a knowledge of, and acceptance of, children with all disabilities, and a positive emphasis on educating and including these children. As in Moscow, spokespersons from the Ministry of Education in Cuba had traveled to the United States and were knowledgeable about current practices in special education. But contrary to those in Moscow, the Cubans seemed to agree with the majority of American practices, while the Russians sought out more analysis of methods and proof of successes. As in the past, travel to Cuba has become more difficult for American educators, so that correspondence has become limited to government-screened emails and letters.

In 2005, a trip to Aruba offered an opportunity to look at the education of children with special needs, and I expected conditions there to be similar to those in Cuba. Again, I was under a prejudiced assumption that Aruba

was a poor island where education was lacking the level of American funding and know-how. Although the weather was similar, and school buildings without windows were common, that is where the similarities with Cuba ended. Where people struggle to make ends meet in Russia, Turkey, and Cuba, those in Aruba experience less than 1% unemployment and they enjoy a thriving economy based on tourism. They are an educated people with a philosophical and financial commitment to meeting the educational needs of all Aruban children and it is notably evident.

Aruban authorities were the only administrators I have ever dealt with who freely offered access to any school I would like to see. They asked what type of school and what type of disability was of interest to me. I chose to visit a school for children with behavior disorders, as I regard this to be one of the most difficult types of programs to develop successfully. At the Imeldahof School, I found the teachers, mostly trained in Holland, progressive and professional. The school was well staffed and the resources were good. In addition, to government funding, additional funding for “extras” was available through donations from the community. By all American standards, this school was operating at a high level using the most current technology and philosophies to provide for the educational needs of its students. Some techniques were truly cutting edge, and I was happy to bring back to my students and colleagues modern methods of play therapy such as Wegabao Guia, a six-week game module, and Snoezelen, a multisensory environment believed to improve communications and understanding of self. In Aruba, a well educated populace, and plenty of money, sets special education perhaps even above American standards in some areas. Albeit, a small population of approximately 70,000 fairly well-off Aruban residents makes for a more manageable situation than the more than 300 million in America, over 31 million in Turkey, over 224 million in Russia, and over 7 million in Cuba.

In the spring of 2005 I visited another small sunny country, Belize, with a population of approximately 297,000. Like Aruba, where independence from the Netherlands was established in 1986, Belize (formerly British Honduras) became an independent country in 1981. As in Aruba, they have begun to develop their

tourist industry, but in terms of economic development Belize struggles. Unlike any of the other countries I visited, the schools in Belize are not run directly through the government, but by the mostly Protestant churches. In addition, mandatory education is not enforced and as in Russia and Cuba, special education is not legally required. However, in the school I visited, children with mild special needs were included in all classrooms and teachers and administrators were eager to obtain information on methods and materials for meeting the needs of children with disabilities. Teachers were familiar with American special education terminology such as “inclusion” and “environmental deprivation” and freely discussed the strengths and weaknesses of their schools. Although classrooms were overcrowded, resources were slim, and conditions were poor, the teachers and administrators in Belize were positive, proactive, and skilled at working with children with mild disabilities in inclusion settings.

Everywhere in the world legislators, school administrators, teachers, and parents deal with the many issues involved in educating the disabled. Teachers have raised the same issues in every country I have visited over the last 15 years. They have observed the increase of children with special needs in their classes, they are concerned about the pros and cons of including all children in the same educational setting, and they are seeking out the best ways to work with parents. Schools often have unique problems, as in Moscow, where it is still acceptable to exclude a child from education, or in Belize where a teacher cannot meet the needs of a child with mild mental retardation in a class of 40 students with regular education needs. I have learned, however, that parents, teachers, and school administrators throughout the world are dedicated to providing the best possible learning environments for children, and in that regard the United States is no better, no worse, but on a parallel plane.

—Lisa Battaglini is Professor of Special Education.



# *Sculpture*

John Hooker



**BUYING RELIGION.** Plaster and painted wood.

A student left a plastic Buddha in my classroom.  
It was purchased at Target.





**SCULPTURE** JOHN HOOKER



Clockwise from lower left:

**WORRY. Glazed stoneware, bowl and goldfish.**

When I see a fish in a bowl I think of my own mortality.  
These cast heads are from a younger version of myself.  
I am closer to death now than I was then.

**FREEDOM OF CHOICE. Steel, wood, glass and gumballs.**

Enjoy the gum. You can have the same flavor from any spout.

**SHOP AT MAOS. Collage and paint on wood.**

Last fall, in the *Kansas City Star*, I read an editorial from a Macy's customer frustrated with the company's appropriation of the communist red star. With all the Chinese products sold in U.S. stores, this logo seems an obvious design choice. The large red stars and images at the bottom come from Macy's advertisements.





**TASTY AMERICAN.** Cast hard candy and cap-gun caps.  
Imagine enjoying this treat. Imagine eating the forty five cups  
of sugar. Imagine biting the caps.

# Islamic History at BSC

## An Interview with Keith Lewinstein



*Last Fall, the Bridgewater Review caught up with Dr. Keith Lewinstein, Associate Professor in the Department of History, to ask him some questions about his research and teaching at Bridgewater State College. Dr. Lewinstein has been a member of the History Department at BSC since September 2003 and has served on the College's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Currently, he is the Director of Graduate and Continuing Education in the Department of History. Dr. Lewinstein was interviewed by Dr. Andrew Holman, the Associate Editor of the Review.*

**BR: How would you define or describe your specific field of scholarly research?**

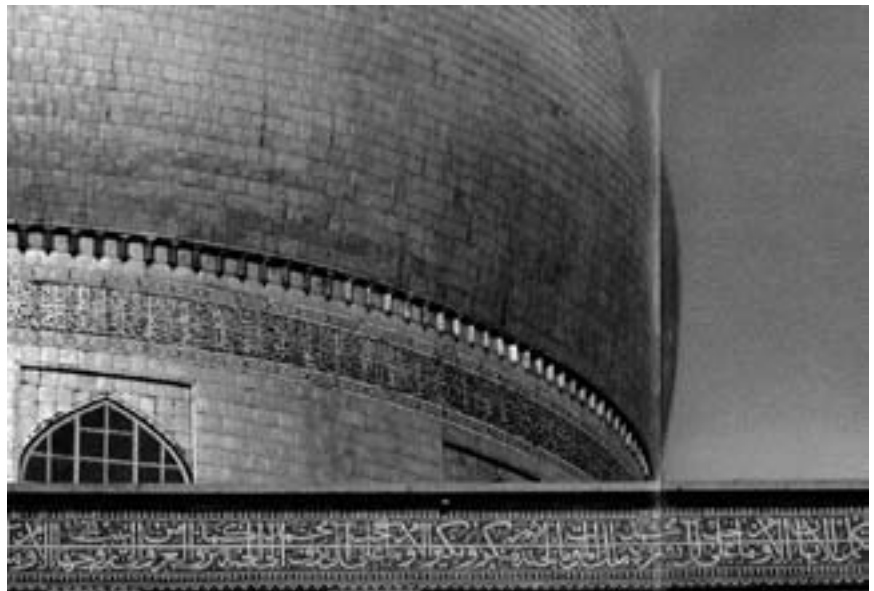
**KL:** I work in early Islamic history and that means the 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, the period when Islamic civilization first crystallized. My own interests run to religious literature. I have done work on theological and legal writings and I'm interested in the ways in which Islam as a religious tradition went through its formative period as Muslims created for themselves a distinctive religious identity.

**BR: How and when did you first become interested in the study of Islamic history?**

**KL:** When I was an undergraduate at Berkeley, I had the good fortune to take a course with a very distinguished professor of medieval Islamic history. Nowadays, Islamic history classes (even pre-modern ones) are full, not just at Berkeley but anywhere in the country. But when I took it in the late 1970s, there were only 9 or 10 students in the class. I got hooked on the subject for a couple reasons. First, it was something I knew absolutely nothing about when I started, so it was exciting for me to be able to gauge how much I was learning. Second, although I had expected Islamic history to be exotic and different, in fact I found that many of the major themes one encounters in European history (reason versus revelation, religion and state, and so forth) are also important in the Islamic world. There was something familiar yet different about it that I found very attractive.

**BR: You have contributed articles and book chapters and reviews to your field. What is the piece of research or project that you would say you're most proud of?**

**KL:** I've written on various topics, but I really do two kinds of work—one fairly technical and pitched narrowly to a small group of specialists, and the other more open and accessible, and directed at scholars in other fields who need to know something about Islam. I enjoy doing both. But if you really pressed me, I'd have to say I'm proudest of the technical work, because of the level



Twelfth  
Imam Shrine.  
Samarra, Iraq.

of philological skill and concentrated effort that's required. I enjoy taking apart classical Arabic texts, and trying to figure out how they were actually composed and what they tell us about how early Muslims came to conceive of their identity.

**BR: This is the heavy lifting of an historian's work.**

**KL:** Some of the books I work with are rather heavy, yes.



**BR:** *You are currently working on a book for Cambridge University Press. Can you tell us something about that project?*

**KL:** The book is on heresy and dissent in the early Islamic world. What I am trying to do is get beyond the narrow technical compass I usually work within and look at heresy more broadly as a social as well as intellectual phenomenon. I want to understand the way in which heresy was disseminated in the early Islamic world—the mechanics through which these kinds of ideas spread and appealed to different sorts of groups in different parts of the Muslim world. To put it another way, I'm trying to describe why certain teachings came to be seen as unacceptable—as heterodox—despite the absence of a church with the authority to define orthodoxy. The book traces how “orthodox” and “heterodox” labels evolved during the first few centuries of Islam.

**BR:** *What are the particular challenges that you face as a scholar of early Islamic history?*

**KL:** Anyone hoping to understand how Islam emerged and took shape has to rely not on contemporary documents (we don't really have them) but on literary sources composed after the fact. What we have in these classical texts is a picture of how Muslims later came to understand their history—a classically accepted narrative—and we have to be especially sensitive to the nature of our sources if we want to use them to write history. We don't have archives with tax registers or census figures, for example; we have textual traditions which have to be approached with a certain literary sensibility.

**BR:** *Was the tenor or tone of scholarly study in your field altered by 9/11?*

**KL:** No, I wouldn't say so, except in the sense that scholars even in the early Islam field are now being called on more often than in the past to address contemporary issues. If the 9/11 attacks had been couched in leftist revolutionary or nationalist rhetoric, I don't imagine too many people would be terribly interested in my opinion about them. But because the rhetoric is Islamic—and the ideology is what we now call “Islamist”—those of us who read in the Islamic tradition (even in the early period) find ourselves invited to more public events. Since arriving at BSC I've appeared on several different panels addressing contemporary issues in the Muslim world; since I don't generally work on such issues myself, my contribution has usually been to offer historical context.

Qur'an (Mamluk).



**BR:** *Would you say that most of your colleagues—that is, historians of Islam—find this new milieu an opportunity or a burden?*

**KL:** For me it's an opportunity, especially when it comes to teaching. I can't speak for others.

**BR:** *Last Spring you presented a paper at a CART forum on campus called “Was Muhammad the Final Prophet?” The presentation drew a pretty large crowd of professors and students. Why does your subject appeal so broadly?*

**KL:** I think for obvious reasons a lot of people these days want to know something about Muhammad and the Qur'an. There's so much misinformation out there and even a lot of disinformation. It might also be that some of our colleagues—particularly those in the social sciences and the humanities—feel that one should know something about that part of the world. I think the discussion we had was spirited and useful—at least for me. The substance of the presentation (why Muslims came to insist on Muhammad as the final prophet) will find its way into my book in a chapter on the early Gnostic prophet movements in southern Iraq.



**BR:** *You have been a student and a teacher at some pretty prestigious institutions in the U.S. (Berkeley, Princeton, Smith and Brown). What has been your experience of researching and teaching Islamic history at Bridgewater State College? Are the rewards and challenges greater or fewer? Or are they just different?*

**KL:** The challenges are great everywhere, mainly because this is brand new stuff for a lot of people. Most students are like I was: they know next to nothing when they first come into a class on Islamic history. For teachers, starting at zero means that you have to explain the simplest things, even the way names work, to ensure that students don't get lost in some of the assigned reading. One thing that has made teaching Islam easier (and this is a way my field has changed over the past 25 years) is textbooks. When I first started studying, when I took that first class at Berkeley, there weren't many texts written for undergraduates. What we were reading was scholarship written by specialists for specialists (or at least for more advanced students), and we were expected to be able to tap into that and get what we could out of it. Nowadays, there are many more introductory-level books and articles available, and naturally I remind my students at every turn that they have it a lot easier than I did!

One thing I particularly enjoy about my job here is that I'm the only Middle East specialist in a History Department, rather than one of several people in a Near Eastern Studies department stocked with other specialists. This means I have responsibility for the entirety of Middle East/Islamic history, rather than simply my own small corner of it. I'd never get to teach a course, say, on modern Egypt or Iran if there were specialists on those subjects around.

**BR:** *And challenges or rewards as a researcher at BSC?*

**KL:** Well, I have been fortunate to receive funding for several specific research projects. The biggest challenge that I—we all—face is an extraordinary teaching load. When you do this kind of scholarly work, you need large blocs of time to sit and read and think, to say nothing of writing. I am amazed to see what some of our colleagues have managed to produce given their teaching loads. I find that time constraints are the biggest challenge.

**BR:** *Are there particular strategies or techniques that you employ when teaching Islamic history to students at Bridgewater State College?*

**KL:** I try different things in different classes. In my course on the Muslim tradition, for example, I try to get my students inside the minds of religious scholars by having them produce a *fatwa*, a response to a religious-legal question. I give them a large quantity of translated material from the Qur'an, the Tradition of the Prophet, and the Muslim legal tradition, and ask them to apply it to a specific question a contemporary Muslim might ask. I ask a different question (and give different sources) every year. In my experience, an exercise like this gives students a much more concrete sense of what religious scholars actually do. This is more than what students can otherwise get from simply reading a textbook chapter on Islamic law, even though they do read some secondary literature. This sort of exercise gives them a lesson they won't soon forget in the complexity and the malleability of sacred law.

**BR:** *There has been some preliminary administrative work done on campus (particularly by your colleague in Communications Studies, Dr. Jabbar al-Obaidi) to establish an interdisciplinary program in Middle East Studies. In what ways would such a thing affect—and perhaps benefit—your work here on campus?*

**KL:** I like the idea of Middle East Studies having more visibility on campus. It means that students who decide to take a course on a Middle Eastern subject might actually end up taking more than one or two, or even doing a minor in the subject. Personally, I want to have students who have taken courses with Dr. Obaidi or Dr. St-Laurent, because they make interesting connections and that makes my own work in the classroom more rewarding.

—Keith Lewinstein is Associate Professor of History.

# Cultural Commentary

## Climate Change and Culture: Some Thoughts on the Precarious Idea of *North*

Andrew Holman

On August 3, 2007, Russia shocked the international community when it announced that one of its submarines had planted a rust-proof titanium Russian flag on the sea bed beneath the North Pole, claiming an underwater ridge (the Lomonosov Ridge) as an extension of its continental shelf and, therefore, Russian territory. The act was provocative and consequential. Until then, the Arctic had been seen by politicians and policymakers as nothing but an ice-laden sea with no solid land to claim. It had prospective underwater oil and gas fields but they were impossibly inaccessible. One spokesman for Russia's Arctic and Antarctic Institute claimed "It's like putting a flag on the moon." The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation called it "drawing a line in the water."

Russia's actions drew immediate alarm, especially from its other Arctic neighbors (Denmark, the United States, Canada and Norway) whose own dormant territorial claims and resource interests in the high north were suddenly and abruptly awakened. Almost immediately, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited his country's Arctic region and announced the construction of two new military bases in the far north to protect its exclusive claim to the Northwest Passage. One week later, Denmark sent its own scientific expedition by ice breaker, seeking to claim ownership of its part of the polar region, a ridge that extends northward from Greenland.

The trigger for this flourish of activity was nothing less than global warming and the concerns that scientists have as the polar ice cap melts. For the past twenty years, scientists have observed a shrinking of Arctic sea ice at an alarming rate, a phenomenon popularized by Albert Gore's documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and legitimized by the Nobel Peace Prize committee, which granted Gore and the scientists on the International Governmental Panel on Climate Change its prestigious award for 2007. Recent climatic developments threaten to alter the planet's ecology by reducing polar ice and raising sea levels, posing massive coastal erosion and habitat destruction. What some see as ominous climatically, others see as economic opportunity and a trigger, perhaps, for a new "scramble" for the

Arctic. Beyond this, there is a symbolic aspect to this transition that promises to be interesting to observe. Global warming and increased Arctic exploitation threaten to alter the cultural meanings that modern societies have attached to and imposed upon the North. As the Arctic is threatened with real, physical change, it draws us to think about what North—an idea as much as a real place—has come to mean to us.

### MEANINGS OF "NORTH"

Place is a powerful identifier. The sorts of physical attributes that surround us have often been used to describe and refine feelings of community, region and nation. In short, to some degree, we are where we live. For northern nations in the two centuries since the rise of modern, secular nation-building, the idea of North, or "nordicity," has had a central place in identity formation. Since at least the time of Peter the Great, Russians have called their country "Empire of the North" because of its vast expanse of northern territory and because its people have long prided themselves on their ability to live and work in extreme climatic conditions beyond the endurance of others. In Scandinavian countries, a similar idea has been captured and broadened in the concept of *norden*, a cultural posture that was seen to bind the peoples of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland. Until recently, *norden* was code-speak for the societies at "the top of Europe" who imagined their climate a cause of their cultural distinctiveness and reputation for diplomatic wisdom, rational economic behavior, and moral decency, among other traits.

Americans and Canadians have also come to see something of themselves in the idea of North. For Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Arctic constituted the next frontier beyond the mythic West after it had closed or been filled up. The Arctic North was mirror for the rugged individualism and penchant for the risk-taking in American character—in Jack London's stories, for example. The Arctic North was seen by Gilded Age and Progressive Era Americans as a proving ground, a testing field for heroes. Historian Michael Robinson's recent book on



Arctic exploration and American culture, *The Coldest Crucible* (2006), focuses less on the details of the Arctic voyages of American explorers Elisha Kent Kane, Isaac Hayes, Adolphus Greely, Walter Wellman and polar rivals Frederick Cook and Robert Peary than he does on what the explorations meant to American newspaper readers at home. For them, the North was a perfect foil for American genius, a risky challenge in which the essentially American characteristics of ingenuity, industry and mastery of science would eventually win out.

Canada has long imagined itself a northern nation, even though the vast majority of its population has always lived within 100 miles of its southern border. The idea of the “Great White North” as a discursive touchstone for identity has had great purchase: in the words of the country’s National Anthem (“The True North Strong and Free”), in its love of winter sport (especially hockey), in the wintry impressionist depictions of its most famous painters (The Group of Seven), in a Glenn Gould soundscape (*The Idea of North*) and in a dominant theme in its literature and poetry, exemplified best, perhaps, in the French-Canadian poet Gilles Vigneault’s well-known piece, “Mon Pays”:

*Mon pays ce n'est pas un pays c'est l'hiver  
Mon jardin ce n'est pas un jardin c'est la plaine  
Mon chemin ce n'est pas un chemin c'est la neige  
Mon pays ce n'est pas un pays c'est l'hiver.*

(My country it's not a country, it's winter  
My garden it's not a garden, it's the plain  
My path it's not a path, it's the snow  
My country it's not a country, it's winter).

“I see a new Canada,” Prime Minister John Diefenbaker proclaimed in his successful electoral campaign of 1958, “a Canada of the North.” And most Canadians seemed to know what he meant, even as they watched him comfortably on recently purchased televisions in their furnace-heated southern living rooms. “North is the point we look for on a map to orient ourselves,” University of Aberdeen cultural scholar Peter Davidson writes in his 2005 book, *The Idea of North*. We have made it a pole of culturally timeless comfort and certainty. We could count on snow, ice, frigid winds, and northern peoples always being there, somehow, *for us*.

#### WHITHER NORTH?

All of this brings into relief an interesting prospect. How will northern nations describe themselves if or when—as scientists predict—the North begins to look and feel increasingly less *northern*? What is North physically if it is not snow and ice? What is North metaphorically if it is not cold solitude; if it does not demand fortitude, ingenuity and morality for survival? Whither North?

Whatever it is and whatever it comes to mean, there must always be a North, and we will always impregnate it with meaning. As Davidson carefully argues, North is a comparative, not absolute, ideal. North of what?, he asks, quoting the Englishman Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Man* (1732):

Ask where’s the North? At York ’tis on the Tweed  
On Tweed ’tis at the Orcades, and there  
At Greenland, Zembla or the Lord knows where...

Perhaps North has never been a reliably static pole—physically or culturally. As an ideal, Magnetic North is more apt. “I am fascinated by the fact that Magnetic North cannot be located with absolute precision,” Sherrill Grace writes in her 2002 book, *Canada and the Idea of North*, because it is attractive to us, always moving and changing, and “...because it is only one of several northern poles.” Global warming threatens to expose the multiple meanings of North and, more broadly, the frailty of the cultural equations that modern nations draw between people and place.

—Andrew Holman is Professor of History and Associate Editor of the *Bridgewater Review*. He lives in southeastern Massachusetts, but imagines himself a hardy northerner.

# Faculty Profile

## Jodie Drapal Kluver and Non-Profit Consulting

It is not often that a graduate class transforms itself into a consulting group, but that is exactly what happened with Professor Jodie Kluver's public administration class in Non Profit Management last semester. As part of the class curriculum, Kluver asked each of her six students to pick one non profit agency from Massachusetts

they were servicing. The result of these contacts with regional non-profits was the formation of BOND—Bridgewater Organization for Non Profit Development—a registered campus organization at Bridgewater and one of the first Master's level organizations at the college.



and develop a comprehensive analysis of that agency. Professor Kluver and her student consultants worked with Cape and Islands Workforce Investment Board of Hyannis, the Metro South Chamber of Commerce in Brockton, the Massachusetts Archaeological Society, Robbins Museum of Archaeology in Middleboro, Andrew's Helpful Hands of Hudson, Vinfen of Cambridge and the Hockomock Area YMCA in North Attleboro. Although Professor Kluver and her students were focused on using their skills to assist regional non-profits, their primary interest was including a volunteer and public service component to the class.

Once underway, the comprehensive analysis included recommendations on how the agencies could strengthen their service capacity and case statement to assist them in achieving their mission. The student/consultants also made site visits to the agencies and shadowed the executive directors and spoke with the staff to gain a first hand understanding of the non profit that

Joined by political science department colleague Dr. Deniz Leuenberger Professor Kluver's BOND group was an immediate success as the non profits jumped at the opportunity to have this consulting group provide a wealth of research and recommendations. In fact as word spread that the BOND consulting group was a valuable resource, other agencies took an interest and sought their consulting service during the summer and fall of 2007. The American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay in Brockton is now a BOND client, as is the Jane Goodall Institute/Roots to Shoots program in Boston and the Keeping Pace: Multiple Miracles organization in Bridgewater. The

BOND student/consultants provided services such as grant searches, letter proposals, fundraising analysis, strategic planning, marketing campaigns and organizational development to the non profits. The American Red Cross endorsed the work of the BOND team with a letter of thanks. An excerpt from the letter states that

"Your collective effort to identify financial support means that we can continue to provide partial scholarships to those in need. And although you may never meet those who benefited from your generosity, know that they Thank you and appreciate your support.

All of us at the Red Cross are grateful that your thoughts, actions and passion you have translated into a financial fundraising plan for the local American Red Cross Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) Program."



Because of the huge success that the student/consultants have achieved in such a short time, Professor Kluver is developing an extended campus network bringing in faculty members and students from other disciplines to assist future groups of graduate students as they take BOND to the next level. Since Professor Kluver will teach various courses related to non profits and civic involvement in future semesters, it is a certainty that the list of agencies seeking the assistance of these student/consultants will grow even more as well as the campus networks.

Professor Kluver's development of the student/consulting experience for her graduate students evolved from the belief that it is important to supplement textbook learning with the experience of real world public administration. She states that programs like BOND will prepare her students for the world of work once they leave Bridgewater. The BOND experience in Kluver's view has helped her students think critically about the strengths and weakness, the opportunities and threats that face non profits on a daily basis. By transforming the students through real world experiences, Kluver has encouraged them to apply their knowledge to specific problems and encouraged them to develop solutions that can assist non profits in reaching their goals.

Professor Kluver is so excited about the initial success of BOND that she has presented a case study of BOND at the New England Sociological Association and has submitted her work with the student group to the Public Administration Teaching Conference and the Global Womens Leadership Conference in the United Arab Emirates. The title of the paper is called "Embracing the 'Ah-Ha' Teaching Moment in the Classroom and then Running with It: A Case Study of Bridgewater Organization for Nonprofit Development

**"Your collective effort to identify financial support means that we can continue to provide partial scholarships to those in need.**

***And although you may never meet those who benefited from your generosity, know that they Thank you and appreciate your support.***

***All of us at the Red Cross are grateful that your thoughts, actions and passion you have translated into a financial fundraising plan for the local American Red Cross Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) Program."***

*—excerpt from a letter to BOND from Tobias T. Cowans,  
Area Director of the American Red Cross*

(BOND)." Through Professor Kluver's vision and hands on approach to learning, BOND may become a national model for transforming and transcending the graduate classroom by blending theory with practice and integrating community service into the Master's level curriculum.

Professor Kluver's graduate students who participated in the founding of the BOND project are Daniel W. Gray, Courtney L. Garcia, Gilbert Kairu, Matthew G. Eaton, Kerri Babin, and Michael C. Berry.

*—Jodie Drapal Kluver is Instructor of Political Science.*



# Faculty Profile

## Shannon Donovan's Online Course

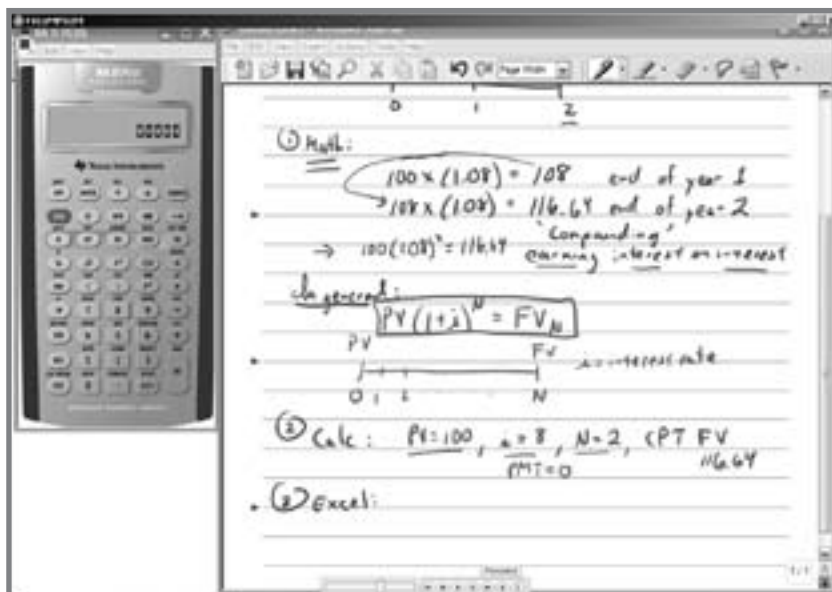
Imagine that you are a 35 year old, single parent of two children (your sex does not matter for the purposes of this story), and you have run into a bit of a wall at work. You started college right after high school, but dropped out when you were given an opportunity at your part-time job to work full-time for a very good salary. Also, the job included good benefits, which was especially valuable because your first child was due later that year. Your plan for your education soon became "I'll just finish my college degree part-time." However, marriage and the kids, plus steady advancement at work, put college on the back, way back, burner. But now you see young college graduates being hired and promoted to positions above yours, and you know that your career is dead-ended without a college degree. The cost of the education is not a problem, since your company has a program to pay for you to finish a management degree. The sticking point is that you can't possibly take the time to go off to college as if you were 18 years old.



Not long ago this would have been an insurmountable problem. You could certainly try "correspondence courses" or one of those often embarrassing diploma mills, but they would not be much good if you hoped for serious education and training, or if real credentials were required. But now you can take

high quality college courses for degree credit without having to go to campus. They can be as rigorous as on-campus courses, and can include significant interaction with faculty and other students, factors that educators have always considered critical to quality education. The key to making this possible is the Internet, and the ability of faculty to adapt traditional courses for on-line formats.

Every semester Bridgewater State College offers a range of online courses for college credit through its Division of Continuing and Distance Education. In the fall semester of 2007 there were 67 online courses listed. Here at Bridgewater, some of the best examples of such online courses are being designed and

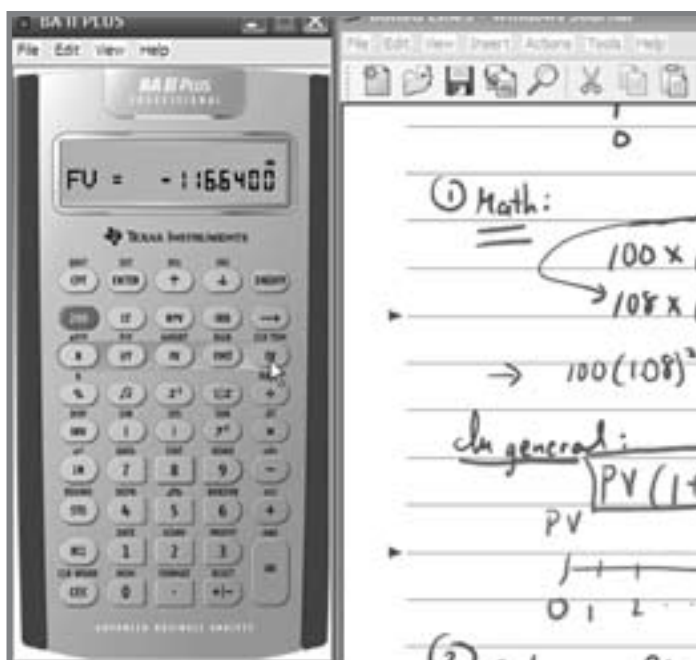


The image at left is a "screen shot" taken from Dr. Donovan's web-based course in Real Estate Investment/Finance. It is taken from a lesson on "calculating the future value of a lump sum." On the right you can see the problem being solved as if on regular lined paper. The student sees the steps as Dr. Donovan arrives at the correct solution of 116.64, seen at the lower right. The calculator at left is currently inactive, but will be used in the next example of solving the problem.

taught by Dr. Shannon Donovan, a faculty member in the Department of Accounting and Finance. Her course, "Managerial Finance", received a "Course of Distinction" award at the fourth annual E-Learning Conference held by the organization Massachusetts Colleges Online (MCO) in 2007. It has taken Dr. Donovan several years to build the experience and knowledge to design online courses that rival the quality of the courses she teaches in the traditional format on campus.

Dr. Donovan's interest in online courses began in 2004 when she started using a tablet computer. Her courses focus on finance problems, such as calculating the value of an investment or property given a set of specific conditions (like interest rates). The tablet computer allowed her to create problems in the class, entering data and formulas using either the keyboard, or writing on the screen with a pen-like stylus. The problems could then be projected immediately for the class to follow, posted on the college's Blackboard teaching site for later use by students or saved in file form on her tablet PC. Over time she became increasingly skilled at using the various programs that allowed her to accomplish her course management and teaching objectives. Using a grant from MCO she took a class on how to design and teach an online course. But she faced some special challenges in teaching her extremely quantitative courses like Managerial and Real Estate/Finance in online formats. How could students be shown how to do quantitative work on real problems rather than just read about how to do it? The course would have to be highly interactive, with extensive capacity for questions to the professor from each student. In addition, an ideal course like this would show the teacher actually doing the sample problems in the several ways they are done in real life. Calculations like the value of an investment are variously done by hand on paper, using hand calculators or with computer programs such as Excel. For Dr. Donovan, the key to teaching all this online turned out to be a computer software package called Captivate.

Captivate allows one to make videos that show how to do any kind of work, then display it on a computer for students to learn from and to practice themselves. Dr. Donovan's courses teach how to accomplish quantitative tasks using each of the three techniques mentioned above. Using an online connection from home, each student first sees the problem on what looks like a conventional page of lined notebook paper as the teacher works through it by hand, step-by-step. (See the accompanying visual "captures" taken from Dr. Donovan's course web site during the fall 2007 semester.) While the problem is solved this way, the student hears the

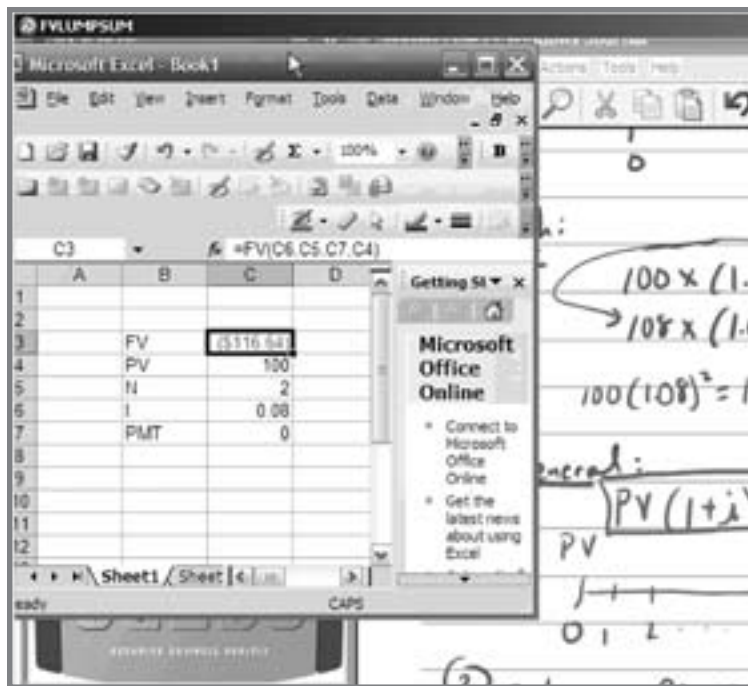


teacher's voice explaining each step. (Remember that the tablet computer has the capacity to record and store data entered from its keyboard, or from a stylus used on the surface of the tablet screen. Particularly important or challenging aspects of calculations can be highlighted in red, underlined, and even accompanied by simulated scratches of a pencil if the teacher wishes.) As an added benefit, the student at home can replay the "by the hand of the teacher" lesson as many times as she or he likes, an aid to learning that the traditional classroom teacher cannot afford to indulge without limits.

After the problem is worked through in this virtual by-hand method, the student is next led through the process of doing the problem on the computer screen using a virtual calculator. Again, the teacher's voice is heard explaining the steps. Lastly, the presentation solves the problem using the Microsoft program Excel, again adding the teacher's voice explaining the steps taken to get the correct answer. Listen and watch as often as you like. Dr. Donovan won't mind.

As with any good course, the presentation of the material, even in several forms and unlimited repeatability, is only part of good teaching and learning. It is also vital that students have the opportunity to ask questions of the teacher, discuss material with the teacher and other students, be tested thoroughly and have the ability to keep track of the "nuts and bolts" elements of the course such as new assignments and grades. All these are accommodated in Dr. Donovan's online courses. There are two additional keys to accomplishing these goals. They

In this screen shot Dr. Donovan has gone through the calculation steps again, this time using a virtual calculator. The student can see which buttons need to be pushed and in what order, first to clear the calculator, then to enter the proper values and perform the mathematical operations.



Lastly, this screen shot shows the solution as calculated using Microsoft Excel software to arrive at the correct answer. Again, the steps needed to work the problem using this third method are demonstrated on screen by Dr. Donovan, and can be reviewed as frequently as the student wishes.

are the use of the college's software for course management, called Blackboard, and a great deal of planning and management of the course by Dr. Donovan.

As the Bridgewater State College website for Blackboard describes the software, "The Blackboard Course Management System provides Faculty and Students with secure web site space for document distribution, course communication, and other related course activities. Students can view handouts (syllabi, PowerPoint slideshows, etc.) and multimedia content, hold discussions via the Discussion Board and Virtual Chat tools, view grades via the Online Gradebook, collaborate with fellow students on group projects, submit assignments to instructors via the Digital Dropbox, and more." In the case of Dr. Donovan's Real Estate/Finance course, the student logs on to Blackboard via the college web site and has instant access to all these functions. She posts her course syllabus which specifies all the requirements, assignments and schedules of assignments and tests. There is information about her as a faculty member, including office hours and any special contact information. Under the tab for "Course Documents" students find readings, weekly assignments and discussion projects, as well as study guides for specific topics. Larger project materials, such as a personal real estate project, are posted in a Projects area. The videos she produces for the course, using the Captivate software, are the meat of the teaching in the course. They are listed under "Professor Videos." Students can post questions and comments to the teacher and to one another in a "Discussion Board" area. There is a "Communication" area for announcements, group pages, a roster, an email port and more. And, lastly, there is a "Tools" area which includes a glossary, grades listing for each student, calendar, dictionary and thesaurus.

As you can imagine from reading this description of Dr. Donovan's course, there is a great deal of work required to design, implement and operate such an online offering. Just writing and recording the demonstration "videos" using Captivate requires many hours before the course begins. And keep in mind that all the students have e-mail access to the instructor for their questions, and that it takes additional time to evaluate student assignments and grade exams. Dr. Donovan has found that these online courses require a good deal more time and work of her than do her conventional courses on campus. But she also finds the process of creating and teaching them extremely satisfying. Students learn the same material and take the same exams as in her conventional courses, and they can even experience much of what on campus courses provide in the way of interaction with the instructor and with one another. Dr. Donovan has even found that sometimes an online "class leader" can emerge during the semester. As with other new technologies, techniques for the presentation of high quality online courses will take time to emerge. Dr. Donovan is clearly one of the innovators who are pushing the process forward at Bridgewater.

—William C. Levin.

# Cultural Commentary

## When Lust meets Lag

William C. Levin

We are cleaning out a closet at home. It's the one with all the old stuff that still worked when replaced by newer, whizzier technology. Since these things were working fine when retired, we could not justify throwing them out, at least not until today. Let's see, now.

Three electronic calendar and Palm Pilot thingy's. No, four if you count the one that just held phone numbers and addresses. That one cost almost one hundred dollars because it was new technology not so long ago. Today, for less than ten dollars, you can get one that has fifty times as much storage. There are also two docking stations for charging these things and for getting them to talk to the computer.

Eight cameras, all told, six of which use film. Phone calls to camera shops and a quick look on the internet reveal that these are not worth the drive to consign them, nor the postage to sell them on E-bay. Great cameras, really. There is a Kodak Retina II C that was my first serious camera, and I loved it. It had match-needle metering that allowed you to (manually) line up two needles (light into the camera, and camera settings to allow light in) for correct exposure. Unfortunately, you had to estimate distance to the subject because there was no focus through the lens. Ah, the Rolex 35S pocket



model with the nice German Lens that collapsed into the body for storage. I think I'll just slip that one into my pocket. Some things shouldn't see a landfill even if they will never be used again. There are even two digital cameras. They work, but one has been replaced by a much slimmer pocket model, and another eats up batteries at a shocking rate. The Cannon folks say it would cost more to fix it than it would to buy a new one that is much, much better. We did just that.

Three computers, all in working condition, go next. The monitors might be a problem to dispose

of. I understand they have mercury in them. The story of their obsolescence seems even more dramatic than that of the cameras. Consider the oldest of my computers. It's a KayPro, "portable" computer I bought in 1983. I put the word portable in quotes so you won't confuse it with a current laptop. The KayPro weighed thirty five pounds and had a five inch screen. It had no, repeat no, permanent memory of its own. You had to put a disk in one drive to supply it with 64 K of temporary memory, on which was placed the operating system for the computer. Then you took out the operating system disk which held the software, like a word processing program. A second drive got another disk to which you directed data, such as word documents. By the way, if you don't really know what 64 K of memory is, let's just say that your current coffee maker has more. KayPro



cost 3,000 dollars back then. If you go by the cost of a gallon of gas today, compared with the cost in 1983, I'm estimating that KayPro would cost, oh, 750,000 dollars today. (Actually, it would cost 6,481 dollars today, but I loved that machine so much that I got out of control there. Sorry.) Also, there is an IBM Selectric in the back of the closet. Taped to the typewriter is a box with three "typeballs" for displaying different fonts. And I won't even go into the cell phones. It's too embarrassing.

I could go on, but you get the point. Unless you haven't bought a new item since your black and white console television from the 1950s, black rotary telephone and "HiFi" system with tuner, amplifier and reel-to-reel tape deck (are the tubes still working?), you have thrown out technology after you replaced it with newer stuff. And the rate at which new technologies are being introduced has been accelerating wildly since the middle of the twentieth century.

There are some obvious benefits of this wave of invention. For example, we travel and communicate at much faster rates across greatly expanded areas, and with much less frequent breakdowns of systems. We have nearly instant access to a seemingly infinite supply of high (and low) quality information. We also have access to a greatly expanded range and amount of entertainment, which can be seen and heard with infinitely more clarity and intensity. And, perhaps most importantly, the invention, manufacture and sales of new technologies are a critical part of our economy. But there are also some costs that are worth noting.

First among these, I think, is the obvious waste. If our closet is in any way typical, then you can see that the money we spend on new technologies is enormous. I can defend some of these purchases, especially those that have made jaw-dropping improvements in how I work, enjoy life and think about the world. For example, my move from typewriter to computer was not just an improvement, it changed my working life. In 1973 I typed my dissertation on a manual typewriter and kept the original copy in the freezer against the potential disaster that might have befallen it, and me, had it been damaged. In 1983 my first book written on KayPro was stored on computer disks. Not only was it infinitely easier to edit, store and print, but I wrote and rewrote with none of the limitations imposed by pencil, paper and erasers. Another example is the leap from film to digital cameras. Modern digital cameras allow the photographer to take essentially unlimited numbers of pictures and to review them immediately. Discard the ones you don't want, then perfect (or ruin) the remaining images at home on your computer.

But it turns out that most of our gadgets that are bound for the trash were only improvements by degree, and some by very small degrees, indeed. As computers got faster and more powerful, we lusted after the newest generation of machine. I can recall becoming impatient with the slowness of one computer because I had to wait more than 30 seconds for a statistical calculation to be completed. The machine that replaced it did the job in 2 seconds. I wonder now that I could not tolerate the "waste" of my 28 other seconds. Perhaps I could have used them to think. In truth, even my most recent electronic calendar/address book/note-taker is only a slight improvement over my old pocket calendars. And the four generations of these gadgets only boast bigger screens (I can still read the smallest ones), better color (the monochrome of the earliest ones are actually easier to read in daylight), and more capacity (I never used up the capacity of even the smallest unit).

In the early 1900's the sociologist William Ogburn coined the term "cultural lag" to describe what happens when society fails to keep up with technological changes. New technologies must not only be adopted for use, but they must be understood and absorbed into the normal patterns of social life without causing disruptions. For example, Ogburn noted that as cars got faster and more powerful, roads that had been built for earlier cars became inadequate. The surfaces were bad and the curves were not banked, so lots of cars started spinning off the roads. Notice that the lag here is both technological and social. The roads needed improvement, but so did the driving skills of the people. And for more modern examples of cultural lag, think of cell phone use and driving accidents, or of the countless gadgets people buy, but never really master.

As the rate of technological change has accelerated, so has the rate of cultural lag. Some of this is the problem we have in learning about how to adopt and use new technologies. Do I need that new software, and can I learn it? But some of the challenge is how to control our lust for every new gadget, and to think realistically about which ones are worth the money and effort.

I wonder if a slimmer, higher capacity iPod would be worth the money? My old one looks kind of clunky.

—William C. Levin is Professor of Sociology and Associate Editor of the *Bridgewater Review*.

# Plus ça change...

Jonathan Kozol, *Letters to a Young Teacher*.  
Crown Publishers, ©2007

Charles Angell

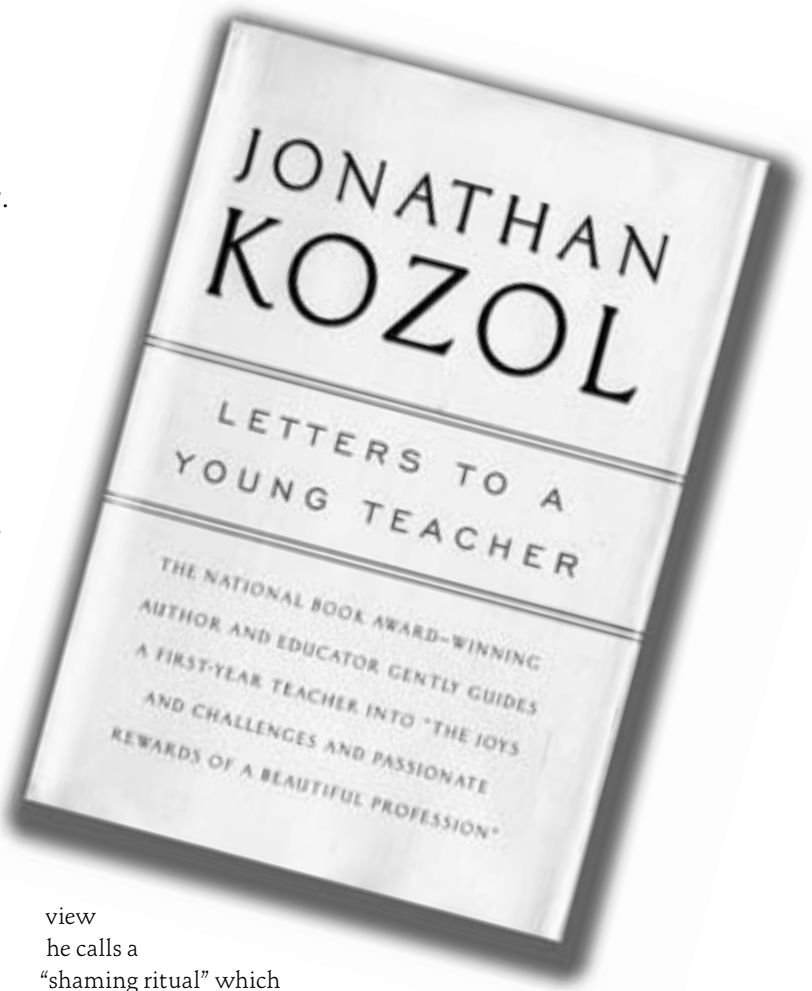
“‘Bitzer,’ said Thomas Gradgrind. ‘Your definition of a horse.’

‘Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.’ Thus (and much more)

And thus in his 1854 novel *Hard Times* Charles Dickens lampoons in a chapter titled “Murdering the Innocents” his British schoolmaster Thomas Gradgrind and his model pupil Bitzer who has accepted Gradgrind’s dictum that “Facts alone are wanted in life.” Schooling has no time or place for fancy, fun, imagination or—most importantly for Dickens—kindness, for what Kozol terms in the title of one of his chapters “Aesthetic Merriment,” children’s love of the “wiggly” and the “wobbly.”

Indeed, in *Letters to a Young Teacher* Kozol uses an epistolary exchange with Francesca, a beginning teacher in a Boston elementary school, to document what has gone wrong in our attempts to reform America’s public schools which to my mind he views as not much different, save in the degree of their pernicious dogmas, from the schools Dickens condemned for stultifying children’s growth. He tells Francesca early in their exchange that most new teachers “have been given almost no advice at all on strategies” for dealing with children who have “already undergone...pedagogical battering.” Administrators, he says, tell beginning teachers “start out tough and stick to the prescribed curriculum,” the “worst possible advice” since it leaves no room for the unexpected and spontaneous encounters that so often fascinate children and stimulate their curiosity.

The imminent renewal of the No Child Left Behind Act has found Kozol once again arguing for amendments to the legislation which in a recent Boston Globe inter-



view he calls a “shaming ritual” which compels “wonderful teachers” to act as “drill sergeants for the state” in order to prepare students for legislatively mandated tests. In *Letters to a Young Teacher* Kozol excoriates “the miseries of high-stakes testing, which is growing more relentless and obsessive in the inner-city schools with every passing year.” Schools have failed to create early childhood programs that would prepare inner-city children for school, started to administer standardized tests as early as the kindergarten years, eliminated recess, and reduced instruction time in core subjects in order to drill students on test taking strategies. “What children love or do not love has no role at all within the world of tough and testable accountability,” Kozol concludes, adding some paragraphs later that “if these methods actually worked, much as I dislike them, I might put aside my reservations.... The trouble is, they do not work except for the lowest-scoring children in a class, and, even then, the gains that they achieve sustain themselves for only a brief period of time. These are testing gains, not learning gains.” One has to agree. Students know how to take tests. They continually ask about class material

“will this be on the test?” They want to know exactly what material will be tested, confusing standardized testing with learning. We and the students have equated taking tests with passing tests on the notion as one test critic once said that if we weigh the sheep often enough, they will begin to gain weight. We risk creating a generation of, if not Bitzers, then sheep-like Bleatzers.

Kozol, upset as he is with high-stakes testing, grows even more agitated when writing to Francesca about the move toward education vouchers, “the single worst, most dangerous idea to enter education discourse in my lifetime.” Those advocating vouchers, says Kozol, give “parents in poor neighborhoods the incorrect impression that a voucher will enable them to send their children to the kinds of private schools attended by the children of the affluent....” As Kozol points out, voucher amounts for inner-city parents would come nowhere close to the per pupil spending normally found in richer suburban communities. They would do nothing to diminish the social inequality between urban and suburban schools. (The Boston area METCO program, whatever its defects, was expressly intended to flatten out such inequalities for as many urban students as possible.) Worse, those advocating vouchers assume a greater degree of mobility in an urban population than in fact exists. Hurricane Katrina has shown the fallacy of this assumption in the numbers of urban poor and working class who could not flee New Orleans. Yet, as we’re beginning to learn, the near destruction of the New Orleans school system has led parents to demand that the rebuilt school system do an improved job at meeting the needs of its students by providing them with the facilities and instruction that will give them mobility, both geographical and social, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

The potential social injustice posed by voucher driven schools, a move toward privatizing education, most troubles Kozol. He observes to Francesca that voucher proponents who extol to parents the freedom of choice promised by vouchers talk a different game to investors who view urban schools supported by vouchers as yet another profit center for those who would make education submit to the marketplace. Kozol cites the middle class parents who want to send their children to “an independent school” and who “suddenly [ask] why they cannot get some money from the government to pay for it. Is it fair, they ask essentially that they have to ‘pay for education twice,’ once in the tuition costs for private school, and once in taxes to support a public system they do not intend to use?” Kozol is quick to point out that such a question makes education a personal commodity rather than a universal social good and

that often those who pose the question, well-meaning people, don’t perceive the inherent dangers in a voucher system when “ideology alone, entirely separate from religion, would undoubtedly inspire other interest groups [groups other than the Catholic Church]—loyal followers of charismatic but invidious people such as David Duke, militant survivalists, people not particularly fond of Jews (or Catholics for that matter)—to lay a claim to public subsidies for private education that advances their particular beliefs.” The attempts to introduce ‘intelligent design’ into the science curriculum, plans to revive single-sex classrooms, poorly thought out curricula for teaching multiculturalism and diversity, attempts to dictate what students should or should not read, all the tactics that the ideologically driven use to impose their beliefs on schools and schoolchildren, these are the movements that keep not just Kozol but all teachers who have spent many years in classrooms sleepless at night.

Poor Sissy Jupe, Dicken’s hapless girl, who when asked by Gradgrind whyever she would put a floral patterned rug on the floor, replies “they would be the pictures of what was very pretty and pleasant, and I would fancy—” “But you musn’t fancy,” Gradgrind cries: “You are never to fancy.” Kozol defends the Sissy Jupes, writing to Francesca in closing that he hopes she enjoys “years of happiness among your children, plenty of hugs and lots of foolishness, many caterpillars, snails, and other interesting things that creep and crawl, unhurried hours of unfolding treasures for your children on the reading rug.” An altruistic hope certainly, but in this era when contemporary Gradgrinds opine that all knowledge must serve instrumental ends, that fancy has no place in the global economy, Kozol reminds us how narrow those prescriptions are and have always been, giving today’s politicians and the educational bureaucrats the dickens.

—Charles Angell is Professor of English and Book Review Editor of the Bridgewater Review.



*Born March 28, 1959 in Boston, MA, Steve Mills was raised as a child on Martha's Vineyard, MA, his family moved to Walpole, MA as a young teen though he has continued to summer on Martha's Vineyard.*

*Every child drew when young, though Mills requested a pencil over crayons to get better detail. This fascination with detail became his calling card. He sold his first drawing at the age of 11 and has been selling ever since. He even helped pay for his college degree by drawing yachts as a summer job on the docks of Menemsha on Martha's Vineyard. Having never taken an art class in high school, and raised more as a musician than a visual artist, of all things he started college as a meteorology major. Things did not work well for him in this regard and after a year working in a factory, he started taking classes again at Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts. He became an art major and embraced the art program, finally realizing his talent through his painting professor, William Kendall, graduating magna cum laude, and receiving his BA in Art in 1982.*

*His first solo show in 1983, just a year out of college, was a smashing success selling 33 of 35 originals at the Granary Gallery on Martha's Vineyard. This started his journey on a successful career, including gallery affiliation with Gallery Henoch in 1989 in New York City. Between the 2 galleries, Mills has sold almost every piece he has ever painted. Producing and selling 500 oil paintings in his first 20 years has collectors literally waiting in line outside the gallery before a gallery opening—creating a frenzy, which resulted in one show selling in 10 minutes. Some of his originals have sold for over \$70,000.*

*With the time it takes to paint in the photorealist technique—some paintings taking over 400 hours—it has proven difficult to do more than one gallery opening a year.*

*Living in Florida since graduating college, the proverbial bachelor finally married in 2001. Choosing from a select group of originals, his wife Leigh and he developed a small print business and are now marketing his work nationally.*

# **Bridgewater State College**

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